



THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

"That has to be the guiding principle for comprehensive immigration reform: border first," said Sen. David Vitter, Louisiana Republican.

"I believe the Senate is re-evaluating its position," said Sen. Jeff Sessions, Alabama Republican.

[Boehner stands ground on border-security position](#)

By Amy Fagan and Stephen Dinan

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The House majority leader yesterday refused to budge from demanding a strong border-security bill and would not embrace Senate talk of broad legislation that would trigger a guest-worker program and other immigration changes once the borders are secure.

"I'm not going to negotiate this bill -- between the House and Senate -- through the press," Rep. John A. Boehner, Ohio Republican, said after he was asked repeatedly about recent Senate developments.

Mr. Boehner said House leaders instead will continue their plan to hold hearings next month to highlight flaws in the Senate-passed immigration bill, which includes citizenship for millions of illegal aliens, and the strengths of the House bill, which focuses on securing the border and enforcing immigration laws. He said the hearings will, in part, "strengthen our hand as we go into these negotiations" with the Senate.

In recent days, key senators have indicated that they are willing to accept a bill that puts the initial focus on enforcement, and particularly border security, as long as it eventually includes a path to citizenship and a new foreign-worker program...

The House last year passed an immigration bill focused on building 700 miles of fence along the Mexico border, boosting enforcement and requiring employers to verify that their workers are here legally. The Senate bill not only boosts enforcement, but also creates a program for future immigrant workers and a path to citizenship for many current illegal aliens.

Earlier this week, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter,

Pennsylvania Republican, told The Washington Times that he was open to the idea of a phased-in broad bill that would make the guest-worker program and path-to-citizenship pieces contingent on first securing the border and improving interior enforcement. After his comment, several key backers of the Senate bill said they'd be open to discussing that option.

Mr. Boehner said senators are shifting their position "closer to the House," but didn't accept or reject the idea of coupling enforcement first with an eventual broad bill. That didn't bode well for several conservative senators who excitedly praised the idea yesterday, hoping that it signaled the beginning of a border-first compromise bill.

"That has to be the guiding principle for comprehensive immigration reform: border first," said Sen. David Vitter, Louisiana Republican.

"I believe the Senate is re-evaluating its position," said Sen. Jeff Sessions, Alabama Republican.